# WAS ABRAHAM LINCOLN A SPIRITUALIST?

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*Text: Prov. XXII, 1—"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches."*

The greatest name in English history is Oliver Cromwell. The greatest name in German history is Martin Luther. The greatest name in Italian history is Savonarola. The greatest name in French history is Joan of Arc. The sweetest name in Scottish History is Robert Burns. The supreme name in American history is ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Consider the great paradoxes of history. Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees. Jesus came out of Judea—Christianity out of Judaism. Luther came out of the heart of the Roman Catholic Church. John Wesley, the world evangelizer, came out of the conservative environment of the Anglican Church. Great reformers like John B. Gough and Francis Murphy have come forth out of homes of squalor and drunkeness. Abraham Lincoln, the emancipator, was born in the Southland where the birds sing through all the year and the flowers never cease to bloom.

Abraham Lincoln presents the contrast of a great soul. In him great thoughts were linked with plain speech. He is melancholy by temperament and yet a humorist of rare ability. He is strong as a giant yet tender as a woman. While consulting all, he is well poised and self-reliant. Severely logical in his mental operations, he is broad and tolerant in spirit. Without diploma from school, academy, college or university, he is an acknowledged father in philosophy. Of no church or denomination and yet a great Christian. Standing for the preservation of the Union and yet known as the Emancipator. Born in a log cabin yet spending his closing years in the White House. Poor, yet honored by a million dollar monument. Said to be homely and awkward and yet possessing the most ideal face and form known to sculptor or artist. Of an obscure family, yet leaving a great name. Criticised, condemned and cursed and yet crowned as the peerless one. Shot as an enemy of mankind and yet worshipped as a hero and adored as a saint.

Abraham Lincoln lived in a great age. It was an age of great names. John Brown, the martyr; William Lloyd Garrison, the agitator; Horace Greeley, the editor; Harriet Beecher

Stowe, the author; Henry Ward Beecher, the pulpit orator; Wendell Phillips, the platform king; John G. Whittier, the poet; U. S. Grant, the warrior; Julia Ward Howe, immortalized by her "Battle Hymn of the Republic"—and Abraham Lincoln, the Emancipator. It was an age of great names, great mottoes, great songs, great fighting, great principles and great events.

"The Lincoln and Douglas Debates" were originally announced as "the Douglas and Lincoln Debates"—Douglas was known everywhere. Lincoln was scarcely known at all. Lincoln sought to have his name associated with that of Stephen A. Douglas for purposes of political agitation and political promotion. Douglas had almost a contempt for the plain man who had challenged him to an intellectual combat. Strange paradox! A century hence the name of Douglas will be remembered simply because of its association with that of Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln and Douglas, however, were rivals not unknown to each other. "Honest Abe" and "The Little Giant" had known each other for years. Both were admitted to the practice of law in the Supreme Court of Illinois on the same day. Both paid attention to the same young woman. Both represented Illinois in Congress. Both were nominated for the United States Senate. Both were candidates for the Presidency.

There was a fundamental difference between Lincoln and Douglas. This was not a difference in personality, physical frame, education or temperament. There was a vital difference in the mental attitude of these two men. Lincoln possessed a clear moral conviction which Douglas lacked. Douglas said with reference to slavery; "You can vote it up or vote it down; it makes no difference to me." Lincoln said, with passion and power, "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." Lincoln possessed the weight of a great moral conviction.

Lincoln will be remembered for his splendid eloquence. He possessed a logical mind, a perfect voice, an original style and great depth of moral conviction. There are three immortal utterances in American History: Patrick Henry's speech at Williamsburg, Va. The speech of Wendell Phillips in Faneuil Hall and Abraham Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg.

Lincoln will be remembered for his downright honesty. Honesty with "Honest Abe" was not an acquired gift—it was second nature. Sincerity ran like a silver thread through every nerve in his nature. It is well to re-

member this in an age, when, it is said, that if a man steals a million dollars we send him to the State Legislature, but if he should be so unwise as to fail of the million and steal a ride on a freight train—we send him to the State Penitentiary.

Lincoln will be remembered for his heartfelt sympathy. His enemies affirmed that he had "arms long enough to embrace all the Africans in America." His nature was so sensitive that he felt the lash of the slave driver on his own back. In the anguish of his soul he made an atonement for the sins of the American people. His supreme joy was to forgive. He would rather sign a pardon than harvest new laurels in the fields of fame. He was tender, considerate and compassionate. The law of love was enthroned in his heart.

The explanation of Lincoln's political success, in the first years of his public life, lies in the fact that he possessed *a genius for friendship.* This is illustrated by his first political victory. The district was largely democratic. The votes numbered about two hundred. Lincoln polled exactly one hundred and ninety-seven votes. No other political triumph gave him so much satisfaction.

Was Lincoln a Spiritualist? No, not of the modern type. He had little time for psychic research and investigation. Broken hearted because of bereavement and of an inquiring mind he talked to those who were classed as specialists in spiritism, but you are not justified in calling him a spiritualist. Abraham Lincoln was an old fashioned Christian who preferred popularly accepted truths to the more modern phases of religious thought as they were advocated in his day.

*Lincoln had a wonderful face.* With the exception of one feature—the drooping lip—the face of Lincoln was well nigh perfect from an artistic point of view. Thos. Carlyle gazing on his photograph remarked thoughtfully: "That's an honest face." When Abraham Lincoln pardoned a young soldier at the request of his mother, the mother went down the stairs of the White House saying, "They have lied about the President's being homely; he is the handsomest man I ever saw." There was as much discrimination as gratitude in that remark.

*Lincoln possessed a mind which always turned to the main point.* Gazing on Niagara Falls where the great waters flow like molten silver, he inquired: "Where does it all come from?" How practical are his mental conceptions: "You can repeal the Missouri Compromise, you can repeal the Declaration of In-

dependence, you can repeal all past history—but you cannot repeal human nature." Lincoln was in advance of his age on every question which has come up since his death. He had the heart of a lover, the brain of a statesman, the eye of a prophet and the courage of a martyr.

*Lincoln's soul-power is seen in the strength of his moral convictions.* Lincoln had a great soul. Do you see that crowd gathered about an auction block in the City of New Orleans, and that tall, awkward youth, who has recently come down the river on a flatboat from his home among the prairies of the North? Do you hear him, as turning to his companion, he says: "Bill, if I ever get a chance at that institution I'll hit it hard?"

*Lincoln possessed a great Bible.* Every man's Bible is limited or enlarged by his own interpretation of it. Lincoln found the great principles for a great crisis in the Bible, and he possessed a mind which always sought out the fundamentals. Listen to the great Emancipator: "A house divided against itself cannot stand"—"This government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free."

*Lincoln's Pew is one of Christianity's most sacred souvenirs.* It is easy to speak about Lincoln in the Capital City. He lived in yonder White House. He sat in yonder theater. He worshipped in the church over which our distinguished friend Dr. Wallace Radcliffe presides. He died in yonder home just across the way—516 Tenth Street—where O. H. Oldroyd has gathered five thousand suggestive relics and mementoes. Lincoln's pew bears silent testimony to Lincoln's faith in the great institutions of our Christian faith.

*Lincoln's covenant with God is a matter of verified history.* The members of President Lincoln's Cabinet are in session and the great President is about to read in their presence the immortal document of Emancipation—

"I told God," said he, as though talking to himself. "What is that?" said Secretary Chase, who was sitting next him, "What's that?" Mr. Lincoln replied: "I made a solemn vow before God that if Gen. Lee was driven back from Pennsylvania I would crown the result by the declaration of freedom to the slaves."

*Lincoln's conversion is the sweetest fact in the biography of the Emancipator.* It is recorded that on one occasion Lincoln said: "When first inaugurated, I did not love the Savior; but, when I stood on the field of Gettysburg, I gave my heart to Christ, and I can now say that I love Him."

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